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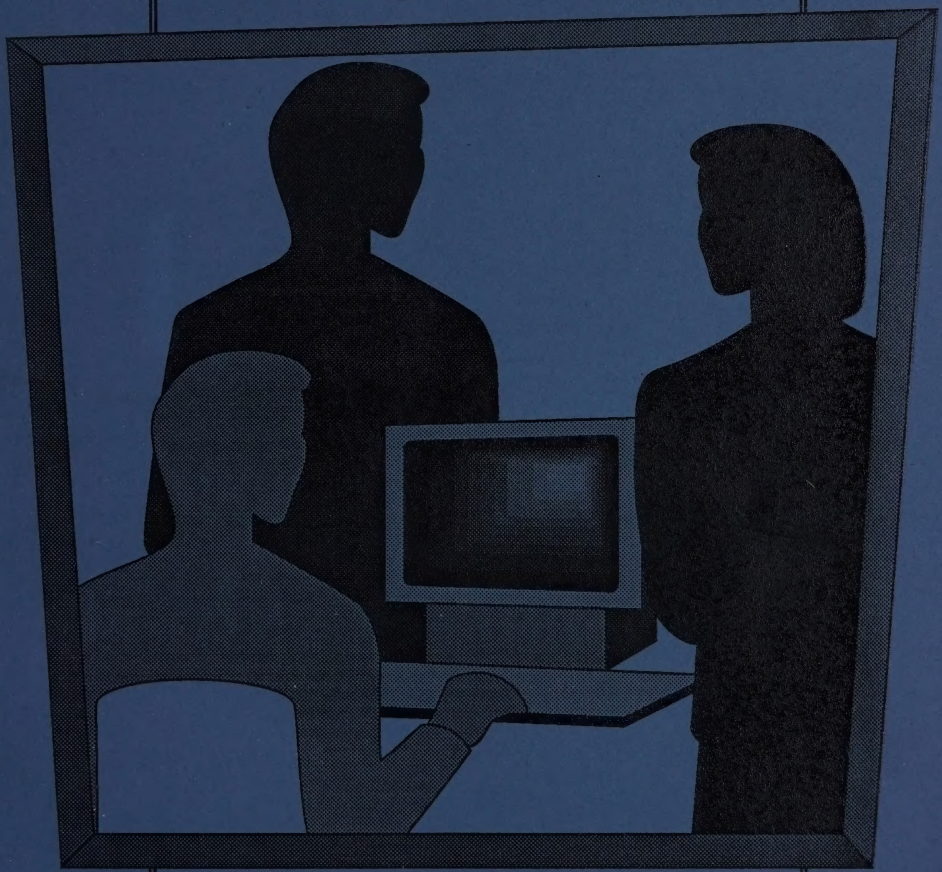
Effects of Automation on BLM's Public Rooms

Survey Results



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Executive Summary

BLM's Automation Master Plan notes the importance of developing public room guidance and providing smooth implementation of the Interim and Target systems. With the migration from manual records to automated records, BLM's public room roles may be significantly impacted. This impact will increase proportionately with the ability to retrieve automated information at widely diverse locations.

A major assumption has been that public rooms are analogous; this is inaccurate. Moreover, depending upon the major programs being emphasized, the amount of public assistance required varies in State, District, and Area offices. These similarities and differences in public rooms are important considerations for overall transition planning.

Data analysis compiled from the questionnaires indicates a number of trends and findings which depicts the current public room status as well as changes necessitated by the impacts of automation.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- ALMRS implementation will provide computer access to land records and will extend to all BLM locations; this will drastically alter the scope of public rooms. BLM is only minimally prepared for the significant changes which will occur.
  - BLM must design an overall public room strategy.
  - New manual and automated records must be designed with the public user in mind.
- Public demand for information will increase in both volume and variety due to the ability to access records from any BLM location.
- Information requests for Bureauwide programs, systems, and records will have to be answered by public room employees.
  - Employee skills must change; a large body of knowledge and the ability to assist and/or train the public to access computer records will be vital.
  - The increasing scope of public rooms may necessitate their evolution into information centers.
- Many of BLM's customers perform and provide research services for their livelihood. These individuals have become accustomed to a long-term, stable land record system; education and training on the new record system specifics will be imperative.
  - Extensive training programs and information networks will become critical to providing quality service. Labor-intensive training and assistance will be required by infrequent users who comprise the largest percentage of public room customers.
  - BLM will need to develop methods for assisting an increasing number of customers while maintaining and/or increasing service standards.
- Conflicts between the use of records, terminals, and printers by the potentially large number of customers is inevitable.
  - Policy development will be essential to ensure fair, equitable, and timely records access.
- Physical accommodations for BLM public room facilities varies from no public area to extensive space and modern equipment.
  - Minimum standards for public rooms or areas needs to be established for varying organizational levels.

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

The July 1990 BLM Public Room Automation Survey was initiated for a number of reasons. Acquiring current and in-depth information about public room employees will greatly assist in planning for BLM's automated future. BLM public rooms and reception areas are often the primary contact that the public has with the agency; however, field office public rooms have not received significant Bureauwide attention or funding during the last few years, nor does Headquarters have a program office providing policy and guidance for public rooms.

Additionally, this questionnaire was designed to determine similarities and differences between a variety of levels of field office public rooms; to obtain information about public users, information requests, computer literacy, and how public rooms are used. Such information will be invaluable for planning future automated public rooms and for developing policy upon designation of the responsible program office. The questionnaire was expected to elicit novel ideas from field offices for improvements, innovations, and public room problem resolution.

In developing this questionnaire, the following assumptions were made:

- Many similarities would exist between parallel organizational levels, with a few minor regional differences. For example, State Offices would be similar to each other, as would District and Resource Area Offices.
- Most activities would revolve around traditional public room efforts, such as assistance with land records, and would not include any significant innovations.
- The public would not be highly computer literate.
- Public room employees would not be highly computer literate.
- The physical space and arrangement in most public rooms or reception areas would be considered to be of poor to average quality and adequacy.
- Respondents would have little knowledge of the modernization project.
- Respondents would be highly interested in records automation.
- The main method of public room assistance would be extensive, time-consuming, and traditional one-on-one service to the public, most of whom are occasional users.
- Many offices, including most Resource Areas and some Districts, would not have official public rooms, but public reception areas, with specialists or collateral duty employees assisting the public.

This questionnaire was coordinated with other efforts currently under way at the Service Center. Questions were designed to obtain information for Interim I public training; Target System training, equipment usage, and site installation; the New Mexico model public room; and records transition planning.

B. Scope

The questionnaire was targeted at <u>all</u> field office sites having a separate location and at Headquarters. Because most offices have some workload in answering public inquiries, information was requested regardless of whether the office had an actual public room or a reception area. The questionnaire specified that respondents were to be the employees who were responsible for, or supervised, public room services.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain general information on:

- public room users (walk-in, telephone, and computer dial-up)
- public room employees
- public room physical space and equipment

Types of questions asked included some with multiple choice, some fill-in, and several with open-ended responses. It was recognized that some of the questions would not be applicable to District and Resource Area respondents; however, answers to some questions were designed to obtain information on anomalies.

C. Methodology

Answers to questions were tallied using D-Base to obtain estimates that would indicate general trends. Many figures were averaged to obtain a typical answer, rather than ranges. Notations have been made where limited or no responses were received and where extreme ranges in answers occurred which would skew the averages disproportionately. Open-ended responses were grouped in WordPerfect.

The initial questionnaire was tested in several States, with significant modifications made to the final version. Detailed instructions were provided to respondents, which included:

- The purpose of the questionnaire
- The fact that some of the questions would require speculation about an automated public room setting
- Which offices should respond
- Who should respond for each office
- How to answer questions, who to obtain local assistance from, and how to handle questions which respondents would consider not applicable.
- The due date

The questionnaire was transmitted by a Service Center Instruction Memorandum. Respondents were asked for clarification of unusual answers, and non-respondents were contacted to obtain questionnaire completion.

II. Questionnaire Analysis

A. Respondent Information

Section Explanation: This section was designed to provide basic information on demographics and respondents. Specific questions included the respondent's name and title, telephone number, and the office name and location.

The questionnaire was sent to 156 separate BLM locations that were designated as Target system sites. Following are the number and type of locations which responded to the questionnaire:

State Office Responses:	13*
District Office Responses:	39
Resource Area Office Responses:	38
	90

Response rate: 58% (90 of 156 questionnaires)
*(Includes two public service locations for one State Office)

Memos were received from two offices declining to complete the questionnaire because they felt it was not applicable to their particular situations. Since many detached area offices did not complete the questionnaire, it is possible that they too felt it did not apply to them.

Each question from the BLM Public Room Automation Survey is fully reproduced in this report and is followed by a synopsis of the responses received.

B. Public User Profile

Section Explanation: This section was designed to provide a profile of all of BLM's public users. Since there are many user types, this section is divided into several classes. **Walk-in** users are members of the public who physically enter the public room to acquire information or to transact business. **Telephone inquiries** are members of the public who call the public room to obtain answers to questions or to transact business. **Dial-up** users are members of the public who use their personal computers to dial into BLM's computer system. The portion for **all public users** refers to any public user, regardless of the inquiry method.

(Walk-in Users)

1. What is the estimated number of daily **walk-in** users to your public room?

OFFICE	AVERAGE
State	31
District	11
Area	10

Compared to State Offices, significantly less walk-in traffic occurs in District and Area offices, most of which do not have public rooms. The State Office responses varied from 30 to 150 users daily. The higher figure was eliminated from the average figure because of significant skewing of results.

2. What percent of the **walk-in** users are:

FREQUENCY OF VISIT	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Regular users (at least once or twice weekly)	29%	15%	11%
Semi-regular users (at least once or twice monthly)	30%	18%	13%
Infrequent users (one or several visits to generally accomplish a single purpose, and typically no visits for at least several months)	41%	59%	73%

Many are infrequent users, particularly in District and Area offices. More regular users are found in State *Offices, but not as many as expected. Repeat users are approximately 60% in State offices, 33% in District offices, and 24% in Area offices. Regular users do not always require the same degree of support and time by public room employees. The average user, being an infrequent visitor to the public room, may not be well versed in records and Bureau procedures. A critical skill requirement for BLMers working members of the public will be the ability to clearly explain Bureau records and procedures for the inexperienced and/or infrequent user.*

3. Of all **walk-in** users, approximately what percentage are seeking information on the following subjects:

SUBJECT	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Oil and Gas	21%	8%	6%
Mining Claims	36%	21%	20%
Land Status	15%	15%	16%
Recreation	8%	21%	29%
Rights of Way	2%	7%	8%
Other	15%	21%	22%

Responses to the "Other" category generally consisted of requests for information on range/grazing, survey, maps, firewood, Christmas tree sales, and wild horses and burros.

This question covers only walk-in inquiries; written inquiries are excluded. Answers related to telephone responses are covered in questions 13 and 14. Typical State Office users appear to have more interest in obtaining information about oil and gas and mining claims. District and Area office users are more interested in recreation, mining claims, and a variety of other matters.

4. How many photocopies do you provide daily for members of the public?

OFFICE	AVERAGE # of PAGES
State	323
District	10
Area	6

Making and selling copies of records has been primarily a State Office function. Many District and Area offices indicated "0" for their answers; however, the majority of the records public users request copies of are physically maintained at the State Office. This may change as automated records are available in field offices.

5. How many computer printout pages do you provide daily for members of the public?

OFFICE	AVERAGE # of PAGES
State	60
District	7
Area	<1

Many State Offices have traditionally played a role in providing land record information and provide paper copies of automated records for their customers. Many District and Area offices indicated "0" for their answers.

6. How many microfilm copies do you provide daily for members of the public?

TYPE OF COPIES*	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Pages of paper	56	6	<1
Sheets of microfiche	14	2	<1

Many State Offices have traditionally played a role in providing land record information and provide paper or microfiche copies of automated records for their customers. Many District and Area offices indicated "0" for their answers. Mining claims microfiche and paper copies of serial register pages are provided by the State Offices and are not available at District or Area offices.

7. How many copies of master title plats or historical indexes do you provide daily for members of the public?

TYPE OF COPIES*	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Pages of paper	40	2	<1
Sheets of microfiche	8	1	<1

Many State Offices have traditionally played a role in providing land record information and provide copies of such records for their customers. Many District and Area offices indicated "0" for their answers. Answers to questions 4-7 indicate that Districts and Area offices generally do not supply copies of these records to the public.

8. What percentage of users are familiar with computers at the following levels?

USER'S FAMILIARITY WITH COMPUTER	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Extensive	10%	4%	0%
Some Knowledge	40%	11%	11%
None	43%	30%	22%

This question was not answered by many respondents, skewing the figures considerably. Few District and Area offices have requests for computer system access. The lack of response may indicate little or no knowledge of computers.

9. What estimated number of hours do public room employees spend each day instructing **walk-in** users in the use of BLM manual or paper records?

MANUAL RECORDS INSTRUCTION	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Number of hours	7	1	1
Number of employees involved	3	2	2

A significant amount of time is spent by State Office employees in the use of traditional BLM records. Many District and Area offices marked "0", indicating a limited number of records and/or little use of BLM records. Most District and Area public room employees will answer routine inquiries and refer more difficult inquiries to specialists.

10. What estimated number of hours do public room employees spend each day instructing **walk-in** users in the use of BLM computer system operations (how to log in, which keys to push, etc.)?

COMPUTER SYSTEM OPERATION INSTRUCTIONS	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Number of hours (per employee)	2	<1	0
Number of employees involved	2	<1	0

This question dealt with computer system hardware operation and was not applicable to most District and Area offices, since most do not provide computer access for public. In State Offices, however, time spent assisting users in automated systems consists of approximately one-half of an employee's time. As more automated systems are implemented, additional time must be devoted to this area.

11. How many estimated hours do public room employees spend instructing **walk-in** users on retrieving information within the computer system?

COMPUTER SYSTEM INFORMATION RETRIEVAL INSTRUCTIONS	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Number of hours (per employee)	2	<1	0
Number of employees involved	3	<1	0

This question dealt with on-line retrieval of information and was not applicable to most District and Area offices, since most do not provide computer access for public. In State Offices, however, time spent assisting users in automated systems consists of more than approximately one-half of an employee's time. As more automated systems are implemented, additional time spent in this area can be expected.

12. What teaching/instruction methods would you perceive your **walk-in** users would find most useful to help them access automated public room records? Please number choices in order of preference, with "1" being most useful.

TEACHING/ INSTRUCTION METHOD	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Computer-aided Instruction	least favored	second least favored	second least favored
Group Instruction	second least favored	least favored	least favored
User Guide	partly favored	partly favored	partly favored
Individual Instruction	most favored	most favored	most favored
Other	1 response	1 response	1 response

The responses clearly indicate that walk-in users would prefer individual instruction, with user guides being a remote second choice. Computer-aided instruction and group instruction were perceived as being very unpopular with users. State Office respondents indicated that their users would not object to group instruction as much as they would to computer-aided instruction.

13. Approximately how many daily inquiries are made by telephone to your public room?

OFFICE	AVERAGE INQUIRES
State	58
District	52
Area	30

Some offices had considerably less or more than the average indicates, varying from 2 to 100 daily calls. State and District offices tended to receive more calls, with Area offices receiving significantly fewer calls. However, telephone inquiries were much more numerous than walk-in inquiries. In many field offices, the public receptionist also provides main switchboard operations. As the demand for information increases, additional telephone service may be necessary.

14. Of all telephone inquiries, approximately what percentage are seeking information on the following subjects:

SUBJECT	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Oil and Gas	22%	8%	8%
Mining Claims	27%	17%	12%
Land Status	15%	15%	14%
Recreation	13%	20%	33%
Rights of Way	2%	9%	8%
Other	18%	19%	20%

Responses to the "Other" category generally consisted of requests for information on range/grazing, survey, maps, firewood, Christmas tree sales, and wild horses and burros.

This question covers only telephone inquiries; written inquiries are excluded. Answers related to walk-in responses are covered in questions 1-12 and show a similar pattern of response. Typical State Office users appear to have more interest in obtaining information about oil and gas and mining claims. District and Area office users are more interested in recreation, mining claims, and a variety of other matters.

Note: Questions 16-24 requested specific information about public access to the BLM computer system via private off-site computers. Respondents were advised to contact their State Office Branch of Information Services for assistance in completion. They were also instructed that if their office did not allow this type of access, to write "N/A" and go directly to Section C.

15. How many telephone lines are available for public **dial-up** to BLM computer systems?

OFFICE	AVERAGE LINES
State	2
District	0
Area	<1

Responses to this question indicate that few dial-up users with private off-site computers are accessing BLM computer systems. Some respondents interpreted this question to mean the number of public room terminals hardwired into the local BLM computer system.

16. What percentage of **dial-up** users are familiar with computers at the following levels:

DIAL-UP USER'S FAMILIARITY WITH AUTOMATION	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Extensive	10%	0	0
Some knowledge	5%	0	0
None	85%	0	0

Answers to this question indicate that most users are unfamiliar with automation and will probably require extensive assistance.

17. What estimated number of hours do public room employees spend each day instructing **dial-up** users on the use of BLM manual or paper records.

OFFICE	AVERAGE HOURS
State	<1
District	0
Area	0

An assumption made when designing this question was that little instruction or assistance is necessary with dial-up users. It appears that experienced dial-up users are generally sufficiently familiar with the manual records to need little or no instruction.

18. What estimated number of hours do public room employees spend each day instructing **dial-up** users on the operation of BLM computer system (how to log in, which keys to push, etc.)?

OFFICE	AVERAGE HOURS
State	10
District	<1
Area	0

An assumption made when designing this question was that little instruction or assistance is necessary with dial-up users. However, it appears that experienced dial-up users are generally not familiar with the automated system and need significant amounts of instruction.

19. What estimated number of hours do public room employees spend each day instructing **dial-up** users on the location of information within the computer system?

OFFICE	AVERAGE HOURS
State	8
District	<1
Area	0

An assumption made when designing this question was that little instruction or assistance is necessary with dial-up users. However, it appears that experienced dial-up users are generally not familiar with the automated system and need significant amounts of instruction.

20. What teaching/instruction methods do you perceive **dial-up users** would find most useful to help them access automated public room records? Please number choices in order of preference, with "1" being most useful.

TEACHING/INSTRUCTION METHOD	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Computer-aided instruction	most favored	*	*
Group instruction	least favored	*	*
User guide	second least favored	*	*
Individual Instruction	second most favored	*	*
Other	none	*	*

**Very few offices responded to this question, and such extreme responses were received when answers were given that their usefulness is questionable. State Office public room employees felt that dial-up customers would generally prefer some sort of computer-aided instruction. Allowing the dial-up customer the use of an optional tutorial might be a very effective training mechanism.*

21. What percentage of your **dial-up** public use the following types of computers?

DIAL-UP USER'S COMPUTER TYPE	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
IBM	0	0	0
IBM-compatible	100*	0	0
MacIntosh	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

**Only two offices have true dial-up customers. In both cases, customers use IBM-compatible machines. This is predictable since the BLM system requires IBM-compatible software.*

22. What percentage of **dial-up** users need instructions specific to their different communication packages or types of computer to enable them to access the BLM system?

OFFICE	AVERAGE PERCENT
State	100
District	0
Area	0

Two offices have dial-up customers. One of these offices has only one test customer. The other office has had a few requests for dial-up capability that are handled by the State IRM staff. Indications are, however, future dial-up users will need assistance and instruction.

23. Do you provide specific instructions, by telephone or in writing, needed by dial-up users accessing the BLM system through different communication packages or types of computers?

DIAL-UP ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Telephone	1	0	0
Written	1	0	0
Both	1	0	0
Neither-but-should	0	n/a	n/a

This question was not applicable to most offices. One State Office noted that they do provide instructions to dial-up users. Predicting future user assistance and support from answers to this question is impossible, since few offices have experience in dial-up user support. However, it can be safely assumed that dial-up services will create an additional workload.

24. What brands of communication software packages are your **dial-up** public using, if known? Please list:

BRAND OF COMMUNICATION SOFTWARE	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Softerm	X	---	---
Emu-tek	---	---	X

With only two offices allowing dial-up access, communication software packages appear to be in limited use in all offices.

25. Which questions (numbers 16-24) concerning **dial-up** users are not the responsibility of the public room? Please indicate the question number and who (which organizational unit) has the responsibility?

OFFICE	UNIT
State	IRM; ALMRS Mgr
District	No response
Area	LIS staff

Apparently in the two offices with dial-up capability, the IRM or LIS staff provides the majority of automation support. Very few responses to this question were received.

All Public Inquiries

The following questions concern all public users previously covered while completing this section.

26. What instruction and/or materials are available for public room users?

INSTRUCTIONS/MATERIALS	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Written instructions available in public room	12	14	5
Written instructions available by mail	8	11	9
On-line tutorials	1	0	0
Regularly scheduled BLM sponsored sessions	1	0	1
Individual instruction	13	26	27
Other	0	0	0

This question includes all instructions regardless of computer applications. Very few offices have written instructions available, but individual instruction is readily obtainable. This indicates a possible need for a more standardized approach or for templates that provide instructions on how to use records. This would also require displaying notices informing users of the availability of personal or group instruction.

27. Are most individual public users able to generate their own computer reports or printouts?

PRINTOUT GENERATION CAPABILITY	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	3	2	2
No	9	37	36
Don't Know	1	0	0

Most users are not generating their own printouts in those offices that have terminals available to the public. BLM employees have been generating them upon request.

28. What actions or activities, if any, tend to increase or decrease public room visits, telephone inquiries, or dial-up use of computer?

ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
News releases or media events	X	X	X
Seasonal -- hunting, fishing, recreation, mining		X	X
Economics & industrial trends	X		

Economics and industrial trends produce increased public room activity in State offices while seasonal activities produce increases in District and Area offices. All offices experience an increase in public room activity after news releases and/or media events.

29. Within the last ten years, has the number of inquiries to your public room:

NUMBER OF INQUIRIES	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Increased	7	25	28
Decreased	3	2	0
Don't Know	0	0	0

Not all offices responded to this question. However, it appears that some general increase in public room inquiries has occurred over the years.

30. If known, what was the percentage of increase or decrease?

OFFICE	INCREASE
State	40%
District	50%*
Area	43%

**Diversity in District office answers produced skewed results. Figures for State and Area offices are consistent with the increase in public inquiries shown in the "Number of Inquiries" table.*

31. What was the year in which you had the most public inquiries or visits?

YEAR	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
1979	X		
1988			X
1989	X	X	X
1990			X

Answers to this question were inconsistent. One might assume that the answers for the most recent years are due to the lack of long-term employees answering the questionnaire. However, some employees listed under Section C, Public Room Employee Profile, indicate that many employees associated with the public room have been on the job long enough to have acquired a knowledge of the history of the local public room and the number of inquiries. The information provided in the above table may not be particularly reliable. If the trend shown in the above chart is accurate, then it is possible that the number of inquiries may increase.

32. What is the highest number of public inquiries your public room handled in a single day?

OFFICE	AVERAGE NUMBER
State	219
District	33
Area	35

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It is apparent that even on unusually high traffic days, the State Offices continue to handle significantly higher numbers of users than offices at a lower organizational level.

33. What comments have public room users made concerning possible improvements to the public room?

The following comments were consistently repeated:

- Telephone lines are busy.
- Needed information was unavailable.
- Equipment was broken or inadequate.
- Assistance to walk-in users interrupted by telephone calls.
- Insufficient number of public room employees.
- Need more seating and work areas.
- Need more user-friendly automated system.
- Information was not up to date.
- Need more handouts and brochures.
- Would like dial-up capability to automated system.
- We didn't know you had all this information.
- Do not know how to use case and land records.

34. What public room style do you perceive is more preferable to your public room **users**:

USER'S PREFERRED PUBLIC ROOM STYLE	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Self-service	1	4	6
Hands-on assistance (individual assistance by employees)	0	6	5
Combination of both	12	26	22
Other	0	0	4

Responses indicate a combination of self-service and hands-on assistance (individual help) would be the most preferred by local office public room users. This is the traditional approach for field office public rooms.

C. Public Room Employee Profile

Section Explanation: This section was designed to obtain information about public room employees and their jobs. This information may be used to develop appropriate training packages and guidance.

The charts below (State Office, District Office, and Area Office summaries) describe responses from questions one and two. The questions have been combined for easier viewing and comparison.

1. What kind of employees work in the public room within your organization? List the series and grade level, the status of each (full time, collateral, or part-time duty), and the number of years worked in BLM or similar land management agency for each employee. Include support personnel, such as accounting, docket, and mining claim clerks.

2. What percentage of time does each public room employee spend assisting the public?

State Office Summary

GENERAL SERIES	GRADE RANGE	TYPICAL STATUS	RANGE OF YEARS	AVERAGE % TIME ASSISTING
962	3 - 11	Full time	1 - 30	58%
962	5 - 9	Full time	1 - 13	65%
962/986	2 - 8	Full time	1 - 13	53%
962/986	5 - 9	Full time	2 - 10	35%
986	4 - 8	Full time	2 - 15	29%

The small number of employees for which information was provided by State Offices lead to the conclusion that support personnel have not been included as requested.

District Office Summary

GENERAL SERIES	GRADE RANGE	TYPICAL STATUS	RANGE OF YEARS	AVERAGE % TIME ASSISTING
986 & various	3 - 11	Full time	1 - 20	42%
965	3 - 11	Full time & part time	1 - 15	40%
304 & 1170	4 - 11	Full time & part time	1 - 24	31%
Various	4 - 11	Full time & collateral	1 - 15	23%
Various	5 - 11	Full time, part time, & collateral	1 - 15	14%

Area Office Summary

GENERAL SERIES	GRADE RANGE	TYPICAL STATUS	RANGE OF YEARS	AVERAGE % TIME ASSISTING
322	4 - 11	Full time, part time, & collateral	1 - 29	24%
322	4 - 12	Part time & collateral	1 - 22	16%
322 & various	4 - 11	Full time, part time, & temporary	1 - 16	9%
322 & various	4 - 12	Full time, part time, & collateral	1 - 19	5%
various	4 - 11	Full time	1 - 15	15%

State Office employees spend significantly more time assisting the public than do District Office employees. Districts, in turn, spend more time than do Area offices, where the Area clerk, range clerk, and various specialists all assist the public. There is also generally less public traffic into most Area Offices, with seasonal or locational exceptions.

3. What computer systems do public room employees access to perform public room functions? Please indicate by computer type, application, and software used.

- Case recordation
- Office applications, such as word processing and spreadsheets
- Mining claims
- Wild horse and burro information
- Case file tracking
- Permit information (grazing, lands, sales)
- Vacancy announcements
- Accounting information
- GABS (Grazing Automated Billing System)
- Land status
- Trespass information
- Bar code case file charge out/location system

Applications used by public room employees tend to be typical Bureauwide systems and small local administrative system applications.

4. What activities do public room employees perform using automated systems? Please indicate activities and systems used.

Poor and erratic responses were received for this question. Responses varied with the level of authority of the system owner. It appears that employees performed a full range of activities, such as create, edit, delete, and read on those systems that were locally created and owned.

5. What level of knowledge or skill does each employee listed above have in using public room computer systems? Note that knowledge/skill is in the use of the computer systems, not in use of terminals. Please circle level of knowledge or skill and indicate system number from question above. If an employee accesses more than one system, continue on a separate piece of paper.

SKILL LEVEL	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Extensive	38%	10%	5%
Some Knowledge	46%	44%	18%
None	15%	7%	16%

Since not all respondents answered this question, the remaining percentages in the table can be considered as "Not Applicable" or "Unknown". It appears that most public room employees have at least some knowledge in the use of computer systems, even though extensive familiarity is unusual.

6. How much instruction or training does each public room employee need to achieve competency in using public room computer systems?

INSTRUCTION/TRAINING NEEDED	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Extensive	31%	28%	21%
Some Training	62%	28%	16%
None	7%	10%	3%

Since not all respondents answered this question, the remaining percentages in the table can be considered as "Not Applicable" or "Unknown".

7. With the implementation of automation, what future additional skills or knowledge will be needed by each employee?

Basic computer operations, specific to certain systems that the public room employees would be using, appears to be the greatest need. Responses included the following:

- General computer training
- Orientation to all computer systems
- Information on data entry, updating, or making changes to automated systems
- PC-based applications
- LIS procedures

8. What type of positions and number of each do you perceive you will need after the implementation of the Target System.

Responses ranged from 0 to 12 positions with a variety of series. Following are the types of public room positions respondents felt would be needed in the future.

- Computer Assistant
- Public Contact Specialist
- Data Entry Clerk
- Accounting Technician
- Land Law Examiner or Clerk
- Cashier

Skills needed include experience and knowledge in land record systems, computer literacy, training in computer systems, and the ability to teach or train. One office suggested that the public contact specialists would need to be able to: "1) deal with the public and various BLM specialists; 2) coordinate meetings; 3) acquire a broad knowledge of all BLM programs or be able to obtain the needed information; 4) have the ability to instruct others in the use of equipment; 5) be able to interpret data from MTPs, HIs, Mining Claim records, etc.; 6) explain symbols used on MTPs and how they work; 7) assure public room equipment is operational and supplies are available; 8) coordinate and monitor installation of terminals for use by the public."

9. What public room style do you perceive as more preferable to public room **employees**?

PUBLIC ROOM STYLE	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Self-service	15%	33%	37%
Hands-on assistance	0	5%	5%
Combination of both	85%	59%	49%
Other	0	0	5%

Percentages differed from the public room style preferred by users. However, most respondents felt that a combination of both hands-on assistance and self-service was preferable. It is surprising that "Other", such as tutorials, self-study guides, training classes, etc., was not ranked higher.

10. What internal procedures does your public room have in place have to ensure equity/fairness in access to manual or automated records?

INTERNAL PROCEDURES	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
First come, first served	69%	51%	42%
Time limits when others are waiting	31%	13%	8%
Appointments/specific timeframes for viewing certain records	8%	3%	8%
Public first, BLM employees next	77%	33%	84%
BLM employees first, public next	0	3%	11%
Other	8%	3%	11%
No procedures	0	13%	21%

Most offices had some procedures, generally first come, first served -- and the public comes first.

11. How do you inform public room **users** of procedures for public access to records?

Generally, offices with public access procedures inform members of the public orally, and often individually. Some offices have written procedures. The least likely method for informing the public is signs or wall notices. A few offices have no procedures. Since procedures vary widely, this question indicates a possible area in need of Bureau policy development to ensure consistency.

12. Does your office have a written plan for implementing new automated systems - Interim LIS and Target - into the work processes of the public room employees? If yes, please attach a copy.

PUBLIC ROOM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	0	8%	--
No	100%	92%	--
Not aware of one	--	--	--

Responses from Area offices were very limited. The conclusion drawn is that the question is generally not applicable to those offices. In general, very few plans exist for implementation of automated systems into the public room. Since the implementation of automated systems is several years away for most offices, development plans of this sort might possibly be premature.

13. In addition to traditional daily duties, other units such as accounting, dockets, and mining claims often provide a certain amount of support to the public room. If these units are located in your local office, what closer ties (i.e., "job sharing" or "automated docket retrieval" should exist between these support organizations and your public room?

The answers most often given include:

- Close ties exist - no improvement is necessary.
- Automated docket retrieval system.
- Case files charged to other offices need to be more immediately available for public review. This suggests that BLM file users need to be physically located more closely to the public room and/or that a better case file tracking system may be necessary in some offices.
- Office LAN.
- Have all employees take a turn working in public room.
- Need backup training and cross-training.
- Need to work closely with SO public room contact specialists for assistance.

14. Do you currently provide information to the public for which your office does not have the delegated authority or responsibility for approval? (For example, you may provide rights of way information, but another office may have approval authority.)

PROVISION OF NON-DELEGATED INFORMATION	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	46%	18%	34%
No	46%	70%	45%
Don't Know	8%	12%	21%

All offices answer a variety of questions, both those for which they have delegated authority and those for which they do not. It appears that public room employees must be able to answer many different types of questions, including where to obtain requested information.

15. If the answer to the above question is "Yes", what additional information do you provide to the public for which your office does not have the delegated authority?

The answers most often given include:

- Case abstracts for land leases and permits
- Mining Claims, exchanges, and other land information and procedures
- Wild horse adoption
- Recreation
- Survey
- Bonding and oil & gas
- Other general information

16. How do you perceive the information service you provide to the public changing with the installation of automation in public rooms?

The answers most often given include:

- Faster access.
- More up-to-date and accurate information.
- More resource information and data.
- Integrated information.
- More extensive training in records and computers will be needed for employees.
- More/less time to assist public.
- In smaller offices, public contact specialists can relieve some public workload from resource specialists.
- Public will require more assistance.
- Local use and number of inquiries will increase.
- Not much change.

- Initially a large workload will be created until the public acquires knowledge of system.
- More training and instruction needed for public.
- Focus of the tasks of public contact specialist will change.

17. With the installation of automation in the public room, how do you perceive the relationship your public room will have with other public rooms within your entire State? For example, will you need to "work more closely with other District Offices", "be independent units dispensing similar information", etc.

The answers most often given include:

- All information will be shared and accessible in a variety of locations.
- Closer ties with State Office adjudicative staff.
- Will need to be aware of information requested at different organizational levels to ensure consistency.
- More Statewide coordination will be necessary.
- We will be independent units dispensing similar information.
- Will work closely with other public rooms in the State.
- Continued coordination needed, with networking and information sharing.
- Not much change expected.

D. Public Room Space

Section Explanation: Answers to the following questions will help the Bureau plan and design a functional automated public room.

1. Does your office currently have a separate public room area?

SEPARATE PUBLIC ROOM AREA	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	92%	41%	34%
No	8%	59%	66%

All State Offices have separate public room areas. The single "no" response was from an office within a State Office also having responsibility for answering public inquiries. Note that over one-half of all Districts and two-thirds of all Area offices, which responded to the questionnaire, do not have separate public room areas, although they may have reception areas.

2. If the answer to Number D-1 above is "No", does your office currently provide some public support, such as answering walk-in inquiries or telephone calls?

PROVISION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	1[a]	20[b]	25[c]
No	----	19[d]	13[e]

The single State Office response was from the office within the State which has responsibility for only select public inquiries. The "no" responses are confusing, since almost all offices, including Area Offices, respond to public inquiries. [a] *13 responses received.* [b] *39 responses received.* [c] *38 responses received.* [d] *39 responses received.* [e] *38 responses received.*

3. Does your public room currently share space with the Forest Service or other agency?

SHARE SPACE WITH OTHER AGENCY	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	0	0	5%
No	100%	100%	95%

Most offices do not share space with other agencies.

4. List quantity, size (if applicable), and type of furniture/equipment located in the public room for **public use**. Such furniture may include, but is not limited to:

TYPE OF FURNITURE	AVERAGE STATE	AVERAGE DISTRICT	AVERAGE AREA
Tables	8	3	0-1
Counters	2	1-2	0-1
Chairs	18	0-9	1-3
Desks	mostly 0	mostly 0	mostly 0
Computer modules/pods	3	0	0
Study carrels	0	0	0
Publication racks	1	1	0-2
Map/MTP racks	1-6	0-2	0-2
Microfilm reader/printer	6	1	1
Aperture card cabinets	2	0-1	0-2
Other	2	0-1	0

State Offices generally have considerably more furniture than District or Area offices. However, the amount of furniture and space depends upon the particular office.

5. What physical accommodations are currently being provided for the following members of the **public**:

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR IMPAIRMENTS	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Hearing impaired	23%	3%	3%
Mobility impaired	54%	36%	42%
Learning impaired	15%	0	0
Visually impaired	23%	6%	0

Types of accommodations specifically mentioned include wheelchair access for both aisles and ramps; large magnifiers for microfilm/fiche readers; TTY machines; and sign interpreters.

6. List the quantity, size (if applicable), and type of furniture/equipment located in the public room for **employee use**. Such furniture may include, but is not limited to:

TYPE OF FURNITURE	AVERAGE STATE	AVERAGE DISTRICT	AVERAGE AREA
Tables	2	0-1	0-1
Counters	occasionally	0-1	0-1
Chairs	6	0-1	0-3
Desks	4	0-3	0-2
Computer modules/pods	0-1	0	0
Study Carrels	0	0	0
Publication racks	0	0	0
Map/MTP racks	occasionally	0	0
Microfilm reader/printer	2	0-2	1
Aperture card cabinets	1	4	0-1
Other	2	0-1	0

State Offices generally have considerably more furniture than District or Area offices. However, the amount of furniture and space depends upon the particular office.

7. List the quantity of each type of computer terminal, printer, and other peripherals located in the public room for **public use**. Please indicate the make (brand) and primary use.

Types and numbers of equipment varied significantly between offices. While some of the equipment listed was irrelevant, types of computer equipment generally listed includes:

- Honeywell printer
- Texas Instruments printer
- Tandberg terminal
- IBM-compatible personal computer
- Epson printer
- MacIntosh PC
- Beehive terminal
- Tully printers

8. List the quantity of each type of computer terminal, printer, and other peripherals located in the public room for **employee use**. Please indicate make (brand) and primary use.

Types and numbers of equipment varied significantly between offices. While some of the listed equipment types were irrelevant, the computer equipment types were generally the same as those listed in question seven.

- Honeywell printer
- Texas Instruments printer
- Tandberg terminal
- IBM-compatible personal computer
- Epson printer
- MacIntosh PC
- Beehive terminal
- Tully printer
- Magnavox

9. List the quantity of each type of computer terminal, printer, and other peripherals located in the public room for **joint public/employee use**. Please indicate make (brand) and primary use.

Types and numbers of equipment varied significantly between offices. While some of the listed equipment types were irrelevant, the computer equipment types were generally the same as those listed in questions seven or eight.

- Honeywell printers & PCs
- Texas Instruments printer
- Tandberg terminal
- IBM compatible personal computer
- Epson printer
- MacIntosh PC
- Beehive terminal
- Tully printer
- Magnavox
- Samsung PC
- Canon printer
- Bell & Howell
- Panasonic Printer

10. Please use the back of this page to sketch your current public room physical layout, including tables, computer equipment, location of dockets, accounts, mining claims, etc. Indicate if equipment and computers are public use only, employee use only, or shared use.

Only a few respondents sketched their public room space layout. Most are traditional public room arrangements, set in less than desirable space. Equipment and furniture appeared to be arranged in the best possible way given the space constraints.

11. Approximately how much public room area is available for **public use**?

OFFICE	AVERAGE SQ FT
State	727
District	104
Area	0-116

12. Approximately how much public room area is available for **employee use?**

OFFICE	AVERAGE SQ FT
State	510
District	115
Area	0-127

13. Approximately how much public room area is available for **shared employee/public use**, if any?

OFFICE	AVERAGE SQ FT
State	547
District	172
Area	0-143

Comparisons between answers to questions 11, 12, and 13 indicate that respondents may not have understood the differences between questions. Responses may be used as a general rule of thumb, but accuracy is questionable.

14. Is public access to the Docket unit or case file area within fifty feet of the public room?

PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCKET OR CASE FILE AREA	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	62%	55%	29%
No	38%	---	---
Distance	---	---	---

Answers to this questions were erratic and skewed the figures for "no". Distance estimates were not included by respondents.

15. Is public access to the Accounting unit within fifty feet of the public room?

PUBLIC ACCESS TO ACCOUNTING UNIT	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	15%	67%	50%
No	85%	---	---
Distance	---	---	---

Answers to this questions were erratic and skewed the figures for "no". Distance estimates were not included by respondents.

16. Is public access to the Mining Claims unit within fifty feet of the same area as the public room?

PUBLIC ACCESS TO MINING CLAIMS UNIT	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	15%	62%	50%
No	85%	---	---
Distance	---	---	---

This question was applicable only to State Offices, yet District and Area offices responded. Answers to this questions were erratic and skewed the figures for "no". Distance estimates were not included by respondents.

17. Do you have one area specifically for "fast service"?

FAST SERVICE AREA	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Yes	0	3%	3%
No	100%	97%	97%

A "fast service" area would enable BLM employees to serve a large number of customers quickly and efficiently. Research, customer assistance, and problem resolution takes a lot of time and is labor intensive. A fast service area may not be necessary now, but if traffic increases significantly, this is one approach to providing faster and more efficient service.

18. By percentage, what activities occur in the your public room by **public users**?

PUBLIC ROOM ACTIVITIES	STATE	DISTRICT	AREA
Researching records - sitting	81%	32%	25%
Researching records - standing	12%	19%	11%
Retrieving reference materials	10%	5%	9%
Filing/refiling	2%	0	0
Other	0	0	0

The majority of public room use seems to be researching records while sitting down. This might indicate a greater need for adequate seating. The response rate decreased with the progression to District and Area offices.

19. *Please list the major types of records located in your public room, such as survey notes on microfilm, MTPs, etc.*

Most responding offices had a core of records within a State's jurisdiction which were dependent upon the State's microfilming efforts. State Office record types were very similar to each other. Districts were somewhat similar to other Districts, even between States. Area office records were similar to each other only within a State. Typical records in public rooms include:

- MTPs and HI's
- Survey notes and plats
- Mining claim information, generally on microfiche
- Topographic maps
- Patents
- Timber sale information
- Case files, leases and permits, and general public land records
- Serial register pages

20. What features in physical layout and furnishing of the public room would you like to have implemented, such as "less public access to employee desk area?" You may attach a diagram for better explanation.

A number of improvements were suggested, many of which deal with better design of traffic flow and physical work areas. The most frequently mentioned recommendations include:

- Counters
- Training areas
- Small conference rooms
- Employee areas to complete work with privacy and without constant interruptions
- Less public access to employee desk areas
- Study carrels
- Professional-looking furnishings
- Appropriate area for grouping public records
- Additional space
- More areas for wall displays, maps, and pamphlets
- Appropriate work areas for the public, including tables, viewers, and chairs
- Central film and map area
- Telephone for public use
- Access to copier in one location
- Public privacy
- Dividers for noise reduction
- Separate designated public room space
- Less access to accounts and dockets -- more security

21. What features in the physical layout and furnishing of the public room do you perceive the **users** would like to see implemented, such as "separate work stations with room for notes and resource materials."

- Separate work areas with sufficient space and privacy
- More room to work at terminals
- Lower tables for viewers
- Easier access to different records simultaneously
- More reader/printers
- More wall space
- Large surface to lay out two or three maps
- Areas to perform case file research
- Library records more conveniently accessible to public

22. What security features do you perceive will be needed in your automated public room?

Employees had limited ideas for security. They felt that most security would need to reside in the software/hardware, with appropriate space security arrangements. Suggestions include:

- Employee terminals where public cannot access or change data
- Locking doors and having employees present at all times the public room is open
- Silent alarms
- Printer locks and other tiedowns
- Security requirements for data entry
- Passwords

E. Additional Comments

Section Explanation: This section was intended to allow respondents to voice additional concerns about the public room.

1. Do you have additional comments or concerns you have about your public room operations now or in the future when either Interim LIS or Target is in place? Please describe below:

General comments received from respondents are as follows:

- Lack of equipment to access information causes delays to obtaining information.
- Need additional employees to meet public demand.
- Casual one-time user requires more assistance.
- Foresee a need for a designated public room, but current arrangements meet local needs.
- Training for public will be needed for Interim.
- ADP skill level of public is low.
- Would like to see more uniformity for small Areas.
- Would like to see a "pilot" occur in an Area office prior to implementing public room automation.
- Public demand is our first priority.
- Everyone in the office responds to the public.
- Appreciate the opportunity for input at each stage of implementation.
- Access issues, such as FOIA, limiting public access and physical security are concerns.
- Policy is needed for public use of laptops, using BLM electricity.
- Do PCs or terminals have to be made available to the public? There is already a shortage.
- We have a hard time getting maps and brochures for the public.
- Need a trained specialist to assist in public access.
- We expect increased public activity.
- Need to educate public users in automated public records.
- Need to supply instructions and allow public room employees to assist more than one customer at a time.

III. Conclusions

A. Assumption Validation

The assumptions drawn prior to questionnaire development were generally valid. To summarize:

1. Public rooms are generally similar at the same organizational levels, with minor regional differences (SOs alike, DOs alike, RAs alike). However, differences between Area offices were greater than between District offices. Public rooms were most similar in State offices.

2. Offices generally provided traditional public room efforts and activities (such as assisting with land records, producing copies, and selling maps) with few variations or unique arrangements.

3. Members of the public, particularly those who were infrequent public room users, were felt by BLM employees to have achieved very little computer literacy.

4. Greater computer literacy existed among employees than the level of computer literacy achieved by the public, but current skills were not felt to be sufficient to meet future needs.

5. Physical space for most BLM public rooms or reception areas was felt to be poor to average. A few respondents felt that their space was excellent.

6. From the responses, BLM public room employees had little knowledge about the Modernization Project.

7. In spite of the lack of knowledge, respondents evinced great interest in automation and the new record system.

8. Extensive, time-consuming, and traditional one-on-one service is generally being provided to the public, most of whom are occasional users. These users take up much of public room employees time.

9. Many BLM offices -- virtually all Resource Areas and most Districts -- do not have official public rooms; they have public reception areas instead. In addition to the clerk or receptionist, a number of other employees, such as specialists and technicians, assist the public as well.

B. Summary of Significant Responses

1. The response rate was 58% from known BLM offices in separate locations. All State Offices responded, with fewer Districts. Area offices had the smallest response rate, which may be attributed to the lack of true public rooms in their locations.

2. Public Room User Profile:

   - State Offices have a significantly higher number of walk-in and telephone inquiries than did District and Area offices.

   - Most visitors were considered infrequent, which requires more public room employee time to provide assistance.

   - State Office inquiries by the public fell in a few categories, such as oil and gas, mining claims, and land status. Inquiries to Districts and Area offices generally concerned a wider variety, such as mining claims, recreation, land status, and other areas such as grazing.

   - State Offices provide significantly more photocopies, fiche, and printouts than do Districts and Areas.

   - State Offices also provide much more instruction to public room users on BLM records. As expected, respondents felt the users would favor more one-on-one assistance.

   - Dial-up access by the public is available in only two locations. Respondents felt their users had little expertise in the use of computers, and extensive amounts of time were spent assisting dial-up users. Assistance was often provided by the LIS or IRM staff. Respondents felt their users would favor computer-aided instruction.

   - Little written instruction was available for public room users, indicating the need for the developing additional handouts, guides, etc.

   - Economics and industrial trends affected the increase or decrease in traffic at State offices, whereas news releases or seasonal recreation most affected the traffic into Districts or Area offices. More than one-half of all offices said that visits have increased up to 50%, the more recent years showing the greatest percentage of increase.

3. Public Room Employee Profile

   - Public room employees have a wide range of years of experience, grades, and series. State Office employees spend at least 50% of their time assisting the public. Much more variation exists in Districts or Area offices, with significantly less time spent by designated "public room" employees in assisting the public. In these offices, apparently the specialists or other office employees assist the public as well.

   - Computer systems in public rooms consist of general office applications and Bureauwide systems such as case recordation and mining claim recordation.

- More than one-half of the employees had some knowledge in using public room computer systems. Some respondents felt that extensive training was needed.

- Future employees needed in the public rooms include computer assistants, public contact specialists, data entry clerks, accounting technicians, legal land examiners/clerks, and cashiers. Several offices stressed the need for public room employees who could teach or train and who are skilled in working with computer systems.

- Most employees would like to continue both self-service and hands-on assistance styles, with emphasis on self-service.

- Almost all offices had an "understood" rule for public access, such as first come, first served. Some had written procedures, but most explained these procedures to the public orally.

- Public rooms provide a variety of information, not all of it within the delegation of authority for their office. Thus, public room employees must be well informed about major aspects of the entire Bureau as well as major activities occurring within their State.

- Most respondents see a variety of changes with the automation of records. The extent of the changes will be dependent upon meeting the public room users needs.

4. Physical Public Room Space

- All States, some Districts, and a few Area offices have separate public room facilities.

- Of those with facilities, public rooms contain a variety of furniture, equipment, and square footage. Computer equipment also varies greatly.

- Many offices have made arrangements for those with impaired mobility, and some for those with visual or hearing impairment.

- Respondents felt their public rooms could use improvements and included ideas for better space design that considered both what would help employees and customers.

C. Preparing for Change

No minimum standards for public room goals and objectives exist, nor has extensive attention been given to future public user needs particularly with automation efforts. Public users tend to be treated as "just another user" and not seen as a group with specific needs.

Neither of the two main automation impact studies, "Impacts of IRM on BLM," or "IRM Organization Study" addressed the impact of automation on the public room. With automated records available in all locations and the increasing demand for automated information, the functions of public rooms and employees will change. More inquiries are expected, and given a traditional record system with an extensive legal basis, automation will engender considerable concern by public users. Over one-half of the Target system users are expected to members of the public. With the installation of the Target system, major changes to public rooms may be expected to include:

- The gradual evolution of BLM public rooms into an "information center" concept. Public room employees will receive more varied inquiries and requests for information in a variety of formats. Well-trained employees will be able to answer a wider variety of inquiries, allowing the specialists to address more complicated issues.

- A major change in staffing. The skills needed to staff public rooms will, by necessity, evolve into those relating to teaching, with an emphasis on automation.

- Most members of the public, currently not highly computer-literate, need to acquire some computer skills. Infrequent users will require a great deal of time and training. Members of the public with a great deal of computer savvy will quickly realize the potential of automated records and will demand additional information, graphics, and reports.

- As additional demands are placed upon the time of public room staff, BLM must prepare to develop more efficient ways of serving more public without diminishing the quality of service. Clear and concise instructions, signs, tutorials, and operations guides (manuals) will help ameliorate the additional workload.

- Since changes to the record system directly affect public rooms, public room employees and customers need current information about the automated system and how changes will affect them. It is important to design such information needs into any inreach and outreach programs.

1. Training

Although this study was not intended to fulfill the role of a training needs analysis, the need for specific knowledge and skills became apparent through a review of the responses. If assumptions regarding the changing role of the public room, employees, and public room users are correct, the need for additional training is clearly evident. Various studies have been conducted which address Bureau training needs, either superficially or in depth. "Training Needs Analysis for Interim LIS" by the Phoenix Training Center mentions the types of courses needed by users but does not specifically address public room employees and customers. Only the Alaska State Office's "User Task Analysis" incorporated one aspect of public room training, called public awareness. Changes in accessing, viewing, and obtaining traditional public records are expected to be significant. How the Bureau introduces and manages these changes will directly affect acceptance by users. Thus, training, awareness sessions, and other types of user-related interfaces will need to be carefully planned and tailored.

a. Public room employees may need training and skill development in the following areas:

- General automation knowledge
- Training techniques
- Knowledge of specific automated and manual public record systems
- Cross-training in State/District/Area Office public room assistance
- General knowledge of data access policies.

b. Initially, the Target system will engender great concern and confusion among public room users. They may need a variety of training/orientation aids on the automated record system, such as:

- Group, computer-aided, and individual instruction for different levels of expertise.
- Awareness/orientation instruction
- Simple guidebooks and manuals for both independent study and quick reference.

c. States may wish to review both public room employee and user training needs and tailor or expand training programs to meet their own needs as well as those of their Districts and Area Offices.

2. Space

Additional public rooms or areas may be needed for small offices, and differing information needs may dictate rearrangement of space in already-established public rooms. Public room managers may need to develop better ways of handling traffic flow, equipment arrangement, and signs. Model automated public room design work begun by the New Mexico State Office may provide workable alternative solutions for these problems.

3. Access Policy

Development of consistent policy is needed from the assigned program office to assure fairness throughout field offices. For example, an increase in public room customers is expected. This creates the need for a policy articulating the procedures for equitable treatment if there are more customers than machines. Additionally, with the availability of access to BLM records at all field office locations, minimum standards for public rooms at different levels of the organization may be necessary. Small field offices may need to allocate space for public access to records, and larger offices may need to rearrange or increase public room space.

4. Cooperation between Offices

With additional delegation of authority at different organizational levels and the eventual availability of BLM records at all field offices, public rooms may become more generic. Employees will be expected to have a base of knowledge to answer questions or direct users for a variety of BLM functions and information. To meet such information needs, State Offices may want to consider such techniques as conducting cross- training among staff members, providing assistance to Districts and Areas, and initiating details for job exchanges between various levels of the organization.

IV. Recommendations

A. Public Room Automation Strategy

1. Develop an overall public room automation and implementation strategy to incorporate BLM automated efforts and to emphasize public room users' needs in the development and design stages of the projects.

2. Include public users' requirements in the design of current systems, including Prototype, Interim, ALMRS/Modernization, and other Target system modules. Provide specifically designed public user menus, screens, training, briefings, tutorials, and handbooks.

3. Develop public room guidelines to facilitate prompt reference between automated and manual records, location of records, and availability of records.

4. Develop training and handouts for public room employees to facilitate public room user acceptance and knowledge of automated systems.

B. Public Room Policy

1. Develop public room objectives and goals as a baseline for policy development. Include a general policy statement about public rooms "way of doing business" and future direction.

2. Expand the public room concept from a records research room to encompass an "information center".

3. Develop BLM policy to ensure fairness, equity, and cost recovery when providing information to members of the public.

4. Develop minimum physical space and design standards for public rooms in all levels of BLM. This includes developing, testing, and evaluating a model public room; suggesting improvements to public rooms prior to modifications; and providing minimum furniture, space, and design specifications with allowances for local preferences and circumstances.

5. Develop minimum standards for long range training, which includes self-study guides, information access, automation expertise, train the trainer, and other appropriate courses.

6. Develop methods to more effectively and efficiently provide service to the public.

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